

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (canceled)

2. (currently amended) ~~The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 1,~~

~~wherein:~~ An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a belt member, seamed to form an endless belt which is stretched by a plurality of roller members and circulated in a first direction, the belt member provided with an electrode portion at a first end portion thereof in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction; and

a cleaning member, abutted against the belt member,

wherein:

a seam of the belt member has a first end and a second end, the seam extending obliquely relative to the first direction such that the first end of the seam confronts the electrode portion and is situated upstream from the second end of the seam,

the belt member comprises a substrate, a conductive layer laminated on the substrate, and a semiconductive layer laminated on the conductive layer so as to have a smaller dimension than the conductive layer in the second direction; and

the electrode portion is formed on both of the conductive layer and the semiconductive layer.

3. (currently amended) ~~The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 1,~~ An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a belt member, seamed to form an endless belt which is stretched by a plurality of roller members and circulated in a first direction, the belt member provided with an electrode portion at a first end portion thereof in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction; and

a cleaning member, abutted against the belt member,

wherein a seam of the belt member has a first end and a second end, the seam extending obliquely relative to the first direction such that the first end of the seam confronts the electrode portion and is situated upstream from the second end of the seam, and

the image forming apparatus further comprising an electrode roller abutted against the electrode portion to apply a bias voltage for primarily transferring a toner image on the belt member.

4. (original) The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 3, further comprising a sensor, which monitors the bias voltage to detect a breakage of the seam.

Claim 5 (canceled)

6. (currently amended) ~~The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 5,~~
~~wherein:~~ An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a belt member, seamed to form an endless belt which is stretched by a plurality of roller members and circulated in a first direction, the belt member provided with an electrode portion at a first end portion thereof in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction; and

a cleaning member, abutted against the belt member,

wherein:

a seam of the belt member has a first end and a second end, the seam extending obliquely relative to the first direction such that the first end of the seam confronts the electrode portion and is situated downstream from the second end of the seam,

the belt member comprises a substrate, a conductive layer laminated on the substrate, and a semiconductive layer laminated on the conductive layer so as to have a smaller dimension than the conductive layer in the second direction; and

the electrode portion is formed on both of the conductive layer and the semiconductive layer.

7. (currently amended) ~~The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 5;~~ An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a belt member, seamed to form an endless belt which is stretched by a plurality of roller members and circulated in a first direction, the belt member provided with an electrode portion at a first end portion thereof in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction; and

a cleaning member, abutted against the belt member,

wherein a seam of the belt member has a first end and a second end, the seam extending obliquely relative to the first direction such that the first end of the seam confronts the electrode portion and is situated downstream from the second end of the seam, and

the image forming apparatus further comprising an electrode roller abutted against the electrode portion to apply a bias voltage for primarily transferring a toner image on the belt member.

Claims 8-21 (canceled)